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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7068
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 7218
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000595

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR GPERSON AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [ENERG](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [ELAB](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: EXXONMOBIL TERMINAL ATTACKED; TWO YOUTHS KILLED

REF: A. 2005 LAGOS 1951

[1](#)B. LAGOS 589

[1](#)C. LAGOS 476

Classified By: Consul General Brian Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) ExxonMobil Nigeria's Qua Iboe Terminal (QIT), Akwa Ibom State, was occupied by a group of youths armed with machetes on 2 May, due to a labor dispute. Government security forces (GSF) killed two youths and wounded two others. GSF have arrested ten of the youths. The attackers briefly held two expatriates hostage, but both escaped. Other EM employees suffered minor injuries. EM is now in discussions with the community and Akwa Ibom State officials to resolve the dispute. EM describes the atmosphere as calm but tense.

Attackers Armed with Machetes Broke into QIT;
Two Youths Killed, Two Injured

[1](#)2. (SBU) ExxonMobil security sources state at about 1530 on May 2, six youths blockaded the main gate to the QIT terminal. They were soon joined by ten more youths armed with machetes who forced their way through the gate. Navy guards at the facility shot and killed two of the intruders during this initial assault. EM reports mobile police (mopol) fled, despite being armed with automatic rifles. The youths still managed to enter the compound and vandalize equipment, a building, and a heliport, which has now been rendered non-functional. The attackers briefly held two expatriates hostage, but both escaped. Approximately one thousand Nigerian and expatriate EM employees were locked down on the compound until 2200 hours, while mobile police re-secured the premises. Employees were evacuated to EM's Eket residential facility, where most reside. QIT is now fully secured, and an additional mopol unit has been assigned

to it.

Weekend Barge Occupation Culminates in QIT Invasion

13. (SBU) Yesterday's incident was the culmination of several recent encounters between ExxonMobil, its contractors, and local youths. On April 29, a group of youths demanding jobs boarded and occupied for two days EM contractor Stolt's work barge, at the Edop complex 20 miles offshore. On May 1, the Nigerian Navy then arrested five or six of the youths' leaders. In response, other youths attempted the May 2 occupation of QIT, which they planned to hold until their leaders were released.

Approximately Fifty Americans Resident in Eket

14. (C) EM reports about 300 expatriates of various nationalities reside at Eket, QIT's residential facility. EM did not have an official count of Americans at QIT, but one security official estimated about fifty Americans reside at Eket. The Lagos ACS Unit reports 37 registered Amcits reside at Eket.

Production not Significantly Impacted

15. (SBU) EM suffered minor production losses over the weekend during the barge occupation and yesterday's attack. Production today returned to normal, although QIT is operating with reduced staff.

Comment

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16. (C) Until March, EM had been largely successful at avoiding negative media and potentially disruptive militant attention in Nigeria. While EM faces nothing comparable to deep-rooted hostility confronting Shell in Nigeria, this latest episode could generate more attention than EM wants. The genesis of the dispute seems purely local and unassociated with the militants in the "core" of the Delta (Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta States). However, everyone in the Delta is fidgety, and militants may be looking for a pretext to expand their swath. EM is talking with local leaders in an attempt to prevent the militants from using the incident as an opening. We have also talked to an important Ijaw leader, stressing to him the importance of keeping violence from proliferating. That said, even if we keep the professional militants out, EM will still have a difficult time working with the local youth to resolve this situation.

BROWNE